

REMARKS

The present invention relates to an improved connecting element for use with an electric motor that is used as part of a fuel feed unit in a motor vehicle. This connecting element includes a fabricated or molded body 7, which is made of sheet metal or of other electrically conductive substance, such as electrically conductive plastic. As set forth in the paragraph beginning at line 20 on page 2 of the specification, the fabricated body 7 is constructed of an electrically conductive plastic or of sheet steel. The fabricated body 7 provides structure for mounting a carbon brush 10. The fabricated body 7 also has at least one electrically connecting contact 6 formed integrally therewith, to provide for connection to ancillary equipment. By constructing body 7 and contact 6 as a single component, a unit is obtained which can be mounted in position for operation without any preassembly of separate parts. Further, body 7, in preferred form, also includes a connecting clip 17 and latching means 22 to function for the purposes described in the specification. The unitary design and construction of the present invention provides ease of assembly and cost reductions which are not attainable in motor connecting elements heretofore disclosed. An amendment to the specification on page 2 has been made to eliminate reference to the use of electrically insulating plastic, since use of an insulating material is inconsistent with the invention.

Claims 3, 5 and 8 stand rejected as indefinite. These claims have been amended to remove any indefiniteness and are now thought to define the invention accurately. Specifically, the claims of the application have been amended to recite that the body 7 is fabricated from either metal or electrically conductive plastic, in order to correct any indefiniteness that may have been present. The significant feature is that the contact 6 and the body 7 are a single, unitary and manufactured, or formed, from electrically conductive materials.

Independent claim 1 and specified claims dependent therefrom were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being fully met by: Yamamoto et al. (U.S. 5,131,822); Aoki et al. (U.S. 5,717,271) and Boutrous-Mikhail (DE 10120198). Review of these patents, it is suggested, fail to disclose a connecting element in which the brush holding body and the connecting contacts consist of a single, unitary structure. Specifically, Yamamoto shows a brush holder 30 and connecting terminals 11, as stated in the office communication: however, it is clear that parts 11 and 30 are separate pieces. That is, terminals 11 and the brush holding body 30 are two separate pieces that must be assembled to be operational.

A similar situation is found in Aoki where contacts 38, 41 appear to be imbedded in stay 11 which is connected as a separate element to brush holding bodies 13,14.

Lastly, DE '198 illustrates structure in which electrical connecting element 2 is mechanically supported in passage 3 located in housing 1. It appears that numeral 7 shown in Fig. 2 signifies carbon brushes that are disposed within housing 1. Thus, the DE '198 patent is only a further showing of a device where the brush holding body and the electric contacts are separate pieces that must be assembled.

As stated earlier, claim 1 has been amended to clearly state that the brush holding fabricated body 7 and the connecting elements are manufactured as a single, integrated structure. Since none of the cited art shows or suggests an equivalent structure, it is submitted that the claim is not anticipated by the cited art. Also, claim 4, which was indicated to contain patentable subject matter has been rewritten as an independent claim which incorporates the subject matter of the claims from which it depended. It is submitted that the rewritten claim 4 is in condition for allowance, as is the rewritten independent claim 1.

In view of the amendments and for the reasons set forth above, reconsideration and allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited. In the event the Examiner has any questions about this amendment or the allowability of the claims as now amended, applicants' attorney can be reached at the telephone listed below.

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Respectfully submitted,



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